

Private Eye Denies Accusation

GM-Hired Detective Sought to Find A Link Between Ribicoff and Nader

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By Bryce Nelson

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A New York private detective sought to determine whether there were any private meetings between auto industry critic Ralph Nader and Sen. Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.).

This was alleged yesterday by Ribicoff and corroborated by attorney Frederick Hughes Condon, of Concord, N.H. The detective, Vincent Gillen, denied the accusation.

Nader was the star witness at recent hearings conducted by Ribicoff into auto safety hazards. he is the author of "Unsafe At Any Speed," a

book critical of the industry's safety design standards.

Condon, a personal friend of Nader's, said in a telephone interview that Gillen questioned him Feb. 21 about Nader's relationships with Ribicoff "three different times, in three different ways."

That was 11 days after Ribicoff announced at a public hearing that he had never met Nader before the 32-year-old author walked into the committee room that day.

Condon described Gillen's visit in a memo supplied to the Ribicoff subcommittee.

"I got the idea," said the

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SEN. ABRAHAM RIBICOFF

"... amazed and amused"

Concord lawyer, "that the circumstances of Nader's acquaintance with Senator Ribicoff was quite important to him (Gillen) for some reason. His disappointment that I had no knowledge on the subject was written all over his face."

Gillen, in a telephone interview, asserted that neither he nor his investigators had ever tried to establish a connection between Ribicoff and Nader before or after the Feb. 10 hearing.

Gillen was retained by counsel for General Motors to investigate Nader's background. The investigation included questions about his sex life and whether he held anti-Semitic views.

Ribicoff said he did not blame the General Motors Corporation for the attempt to try to establish a relationship with Nader. He also noted that none of his own friends had been questioned, but only Nader's acquaintances.

"I'm not angry about it," Ribicoff said about the case. "I don't take myself that importantly."

"It's amazing how stupid the

detective agency was—their complete insensitivity.

"When a large corporation

puts its reputation in the hands of men like Gillen, it's tragic," the Senator said.